



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

## A PROCLAMATION

### GEORGIA SAFE BOATING WEEK

- WHEREAS: The State of Georgia is blessed with many beautiful and accessible coastal waters, freshwater rivers and lakes, providing citizens with many boating and water-related activities; and
- WHEREAS: Unfortunately, an average of 700 people die each year in boating-related accidents in the United States. Nearly 70 percent of these fatalities are caused by drowning, and the vast majority of such accidents are brought on by human error or poor judgment rather than mechanical or environmental factors; and
- WHEREAS: Six deaths were reported during the 2017 boating season in Georgia, representing a decrease from the 19 fatalities reported during the 2016 boating season; and
- WHEREAS: During Georgia Safe Boating Week and throughout the year, dedicated enforcement officers, as well as volunteer organizations, provide Georgia citizens with the knowledge and skills to become safer and more responsible boaters; and
- WHEREAS: We have the freedom and ability to use many of Georgia's waterways for personal recreation and enjoyment. The growing popularity of recreational boating and related water sports has increased the responsibilities of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as volunteer organizations such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron, who strive to ensure the safety of the boating public; and
- WHEREAS: A significant number of boaters who drowned would likely be alive today if they had been wearing life jackets. Drowning is the reported cause of death in three-fourths of all boating fatalities and in 2015, 85 percent of drowning victims in recreational boating accidents were not wearing a life jacket; and
- WHEREAS: Boaters are required to have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved wearable life jacket on board and available for each person on the boat. Boating safety advocates recommend that all boaters and passengers not only have a life jacket, but also wear it while boating; and
- WHEREAS: SPLASH, an anti-drowning campaign, aims to reduce all water-related deaths throughout Georgia. In the first eight months of the campaign, more than 200 boat ramps were stenciled with a safety message, additional locations were identified statewide for the placement of life jacket loaner boards, and printed materials were provided to citizens to increase awareness of boating safety; and
- WHEREAS: SPLASH highlights the necessary actions for water safety, such as supervising small children, preventing accidents by properly securing swimming areas and making safety equipment easily accessible, wearing life jackets, keeping small children at arms-length, taking swim lessons, and having a water safety plan; and
- WHEREAS: Checking the weather, filing a float plan, staying sober, and following Coast Guard regulations are some of the essential elements of safe boating. Boating safety knowledge and skills are important in reducing human error, improving judgment, and ultimately saving lives; now
- THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim May 19-26, 2018, as GEORGIA SAFE BOATING WEEK.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of May in the year of our Lord two thousand eighteen.



*Nathan Deal*

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

*Chris W. Riley*

CHIEF OF STAFF